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Top Secret

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Monday 7 August 1978

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NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Monday, 7 August 1978

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The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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LEBANON: Renewed Shelling

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[REDACTED] //Syrian forces renewed their heavy shelling of Christian neighborhoods in East Beirut this weekend in retaliation for continued Christian shelling and sniping. The week-old stalemate in southern Lebanon between Lebanese Army troops and Christian militiamen continues, although negotiations are still under way and there are some signs of a possible compromise.//

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[REDACTED] //The Syrian artillery shelling of East Beirut reportedly lasted over six hours Saturday night and was concentrated on the Christian districts of Ashrafiyah and Ain-Rummaneh. It was apparently the heaviest shelling since the five-day Syrian bombardment of Christian positions in the first week of July that provoked Israeli threats of intervention. The Syrians resumed heavy shelling of the Christian districts last night.//

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] negotiations continue over the future of Major Haddad, leader of the Christian militiamen in the south. The cease-fire Haddad ordered on Friday seems to be holding. Yesterday, Haddad announced to Israeli radio that he had reached a "settlement" with the Lebanese Army, but refused to give any details. [REDACTED]

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CHINA-CAMBODIA-VIETNAM: Sitrep

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[REDACTED] China used Cambodian Defense Minister Son Sen's visit to Peking last week to warn Vietnam not to expand its border war with Cambodia. Peking made the visit--which coincided with

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China's Army Day and which came at a time of sustained Vietnamese military operations in eastern Cambodia--a major demonstration of its "militant solidarity" with Phnom Penh.

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[] The Cambodian Defense Minister departed Peking on Saturday proclaiming his visit a "complete success." His week-long stay in China included a meeting with Premier Hua Kuo-feng and extensive talks with Vice Premiers Teng Hsiao-ping and Chen Hsi-lien. Son Sen undoubtedly briefed his hosts on the military situation in eastern Cambodia and probably requested increased military assistance.

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[] In his speeches in Peking, Son Sen repeatedly attacked the Vietnamese for their "aggression" against Cambodia. Although they avoided mentioning Vietnam by name, Chinese leaders responded by assuring the Cambodians of Peking's unreserved "support and assistance."

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[] The Chinese, moreover, published their most comprehensive and direct propaganda attack on Vietnam during the course of Son Sen's visit. The article, which appeared in *Red Flag*--the Chinese party's leading periodical--accused Vietnam of willingly acting as Moscow's "forward outpost," of seeking "regional hegemony" in Southeast Asia, and of pursuing a "war of aggression" against Cambodia.

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[] Cambodian Foreign Minister Ieng Sary--en route home from the nonaligned conference--joined Son Sen in Peking last Monday. The Chinese treated Ieng Sary's visit as a separate occasion, however, for they apparently did not wish to upstage Son Sen or otherwise dilute the military overtones of his visit.

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AFGHANISTAN: Principal Judgment

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[] //The Daily publishes the principal judgments of an Interagency Intelligence Memorandum entitled "Afghanistan: Orientation and Policies of the Taraki Government."//

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[] //The government of President Taraki that came to power in April 1978 is much more closely oriented toward the USSR than have been previous regimes in Afghanistan. The new

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government will attempt to preserve Afghanistan's basic independence from Moscow, but it is not clear that it will be able to control the growth of Soviet influence in the country.//

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[] //We have no evidence that the USSR was directly involved in the coup that brought the new government to power, but Moscow has strengthened significantly its historically strong position in Afghanistan. The Soviets' near-term aim is to solidify the new government's control of the country and the expanded Soviet presence in Afghanistan--both steps to ensure against any backsliding in the bilateral relationship. Over the longer term the Soviets will seek to guide the new regime in the implementation of domestic and foreign policies compatible with those of the USSR.//

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[] //President Taraki's strength derives from his control of the Marxist-oriented Peoples' Democratic Party and the support of critically placed leftist Army officers. The new government, like its predecessors, has no widespread popular support, however, and government control is very limited in parts of the country. The new regime faces rebellion from some Pathan tribes and strong opposition from Islamic conservatives.//

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[] //The survival of the Taraki government will depend almost entirely on the military, and its loyalties are uncertain. One or more attempted counter coups are probable, but it is not clear that any will have organized the degree of military support necessary for success. The Soviets' expanded presence in Afghanistan []

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[] will provide the USSR with an increased capability to intervene militarily on short notice if it should decide to do so in the future to protect a pro-Soviet government in Kabul. We believe, however, that the USSR will seek to avoid sending its own troops to Afghanistan.//

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[] //The domestic policies announced by the new regime, if implemented, would increase substantially the role of government throughout the society, but they would not turn Afghanistan into a Soviet-style state. Priorities include the redistribution of land and water rights, nationalization of industry, and basic reforms in education and health services.//

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[] //Afghanistan's relations with its anti-Communist neighbors, Pakistan and Iran, will deteriorate under the Taraki

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government, but in the near term probably not to the point of armed conflict. The Afghans and Soviets will exercise restraint with these states to avoid jeopardizing the security of the Taraki regime; the Iranians and Pakistanis for the time being will seek continued correct relations in the hope of limiting the growth of Soviet influence in the area.//

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//US-Afghan relations are likely to remain correct but cool for the foreseeable future. The Afghans will want to preserve some tie to Washington as an appearance of balance in their relations with the USSR, but Soviet influence and the certainty that US assistance will remain modest compared with that of the USSR will preclude a closer relationship.

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USSR: Renewed Condemnation of Peking

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Pravda's castigation of Peking on Friday is one of a series of recent statements on the "China problem" that suggest the USSR is increasingly preoccupied with the course of US-Chinese relations. While Moscow is clearly concerned about a US attempt to "play the China card" against the USSR, the Soviets seem more concerned about what they see as Peking's potential to exploit "antidetente" sympathies within what Moscow perceives as a divided US administration. Other Soviet commentary suggests, however, that Moscow still sees the opportunity to insulate the US-Soviet relationship from potential manipulation by Peking.

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The *Pravda* article of Friday--the second since early June signed by I. Aleksandrov, a pseudonym indicating approval by the top leadership--comes in answer to an article by Chinese Defense Minister Hsu Hsiang-Chien published in Peking last week. Hsu attacked the USSR as China's main enemy while reiterating the Maoist thesis on the validity of war as an instrument of national policy even in the nuclear age. Aleksandrov holds up Hsu's article as proof that the Chinese leaders "have been gripped in a veritable militarist hysteria."

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[] Aleksandrov further warns that Western attempts to play the "Chinese card" coincide with the Maoist design "to provoke . . . a military collision" between the US and USSR. He implied that Washington should not be taken in by Peking.

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[] In an address on Saturday, KGB chief and Politburo member Yuriy Andropov continued the campaign against Peking by charging that the Chinese were supporting the most reactionary, anti-Soviet forces, including "the Washington hawks." Andropov, however, included his condemnation of Peking in the context of a generally positive affirmation of the Soviet policy of detente.

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[] He said that most politicians in the West are aware that there is no "reasonable alternative to detente." Andropov thus seemed to imply that the Chinese threat to the US-Soviet relationship stemmed from Peking's appeals to "Washington hawks."

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[] Yet another voice in recent Soviet commentary on US-Chinese relations has been that of Aleksander Bovin, currently political observer for *Izvestiya*. Bovin is known for his somewhat maverick opinions, but he has close ties to members of the Central Committee and is knowledgeable about high-level discussions on various issues.

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[] In a domestic broadcast on Friday, Bovin argued that Sino-US "rapprochement" is not really in the offing but is merely being talked about more. Bovin characterized Chinese policy as an attempt to frustrate the development of Soviet-US relations and noted that the US understands that a rapprochement with China on an anti-Soviet basis "does not accord with the global interests of the United States."

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[] Bovin said there is a "struggle between two points of view" in the US, with one group favoring making concessions to China in order to press the USSR and another group arguing against making such concessions out of concern they would undermine US-Soviet detente. Bovin concludes that neither group has "gained the upper hand." He thus seemed to be urging the Soviet leadership not to exaggerate the nature of the Chinese threat to US-Soviet relations.

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[] Moscow's escalation of polemics against Peking at this time may reflect Soviet concern about the possible manipulation of the "China card" in a broader international context,

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with immediate attention being focused on Chinese Premier Hua Kuo-feng's coming visit to Iran, Yugoslavia, and Romania later this month. The Soviets may be seeking to signal in advance their unhappiness over Hua's trip and thus hopefully limit the room for maneuver by both the Chinese and their hosts.

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